Exploring Face Threatening Acts and Dominance of Powerful Interlocutor(S) Over "Other(S)" in ASUU Group Chat, Federal University of Kashere

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ABSTRACT: *Existing Literature around pragmatics reveals that the concept of (im)politeness continued getting impetus in the contemporary scholarship, especially, with the increasing advancements in information technology which shifts the interest of most linguistic studies towards computer mediated discourse. It is further evident that most of the researches carried out on the said concept focus more on dialogic and monologue data: drama/play, political debates, class room discourses, court texts amongst, with minute attention forthcoming from a polylogue discourse(s). Setting on this background, the present study attempts to interrogate the identified less examined data-type to explore face threatening instances and self-imposition of powerful discourse participants over the less powerful interlocutors. The dataset for this study was generated from a WhatsApp group chat of ASUU members, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Federal University of Kashere. Purposeful sampling technique has been adopted for the facts not all the chats are relevant to the research. The most preponderant impoliteness strategies realised in the discourse are Insults and dismissals/silencers, while the former further classified into three viz, personalised negative assertions; personalised negative references; and personalised third-person negative references.*

KEYWORDS: Pragmatics, impoliteness, face threatening, self-imposition, polylogue discourse.

INTRODUCTION

It is quintessentially proven that communication system has been revolutionalised in the 21st century, whereby internet means substitutes most of the traditional ways through various inventories and subsequent innovations (Madu, Aboyade, &Ajayi, 2017; Mubarak, 2016; Amaya, 2019). Nigeria, where the present study situates, is not left out from the said global communication ease quest, where is being ranked the topmost Internet users in Africa with about 44 million users (World Internet Stats, 2011as citedin Chiluwa&Ajiboye, 2015). Further

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corroborating the fact above, Varrella (2020) discovers that there are about 85.49 active users of internet in Nigeria. These innovations provide users with options of plentiful platforms such as weblog, we chat, WhatsApp handle etc. According to Akintola, Bello, &Daramola (2016:3), WhatsApp, which is the source of data in this study, is a pun of the contracted form of what's Up, launched in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum as SMS alternative to fit all smart phones. The said mobile instant messaging platform is rated the most popular App with 150 million users accepted by various groups for social interaction (Adomi&Uwakwe, 2019; Amaya, 2019). This radical development in communication system redirects most researchers' interest towards studying digital communication to which linguistics is not an exception.

Generally, computer mediated communication can be synchronous or asynchronous, whereby participants (in both situation) are allowed to interact from a far distance (Taiwo, 2020). It has further been elucidated that 'space and time' factors in a group communication that encourages comments and counter-comment may likely result to impoliteness (Taiwo, 2020:123). The field of linguistic (im)politeness which was developed in the mid-1990s, is now considered the fastest pragmatics sub-discipline with the largest researched topics in the 21st century (Sinkeviciute, 2015). The central argument in impoliteness anchors on awareness of the speaker's perception of the listener as same intentional, unless when they are produced not unaware, but the face can best be evaluated as being threatened by their emotional reactions. Establishing from plethora of researches, Culpeper & Claire (2017) claim that words can equally injure and hurt human being like stones do, so long as they are employed to do same. The position above invariably projects possibility of having tips for preventing or redeeming such occurrences. Consequently, (im)politeness can comfortably be said to be a resource of unravelling tips for managing and repairing social interactions.This paper therefore, aims to join the current trends of language studies on computer mediated communication to interrogate the concepts of face threatening act (FTA), face boosting (FB) and the domination of less powerful discourse participant(s) by the powerful interlocutor(s). The argument this research holds is that, these phenomenon are said to be common linguistic practices in a multilogic discourse such as ASUU group chat, where contentious issues are often debated among colleagues of multifaceted background across disciplines with divergent opinions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The studies on media communication have dominated the literature depository of the contemporary scholarship (Chiluwa and Ajiboye, 2015). While some of the studies are non-linguistic base (social and management sciences), much as well come from the linguistics domain across different linguistic perspectives. Impoliteness concept having rated topmost, with the most researched topics among pragmatics domain, exhibits further research dimensions. While some researchers basically focus on dialogue (e.g. Mohammed and Abbas2015), others pay attention towards monologue or polylogue data that may comprise Sermon/preaching, political speeches, class room interaction, polylogal amongst (e.g. Kareem, 2018; Dobs, 2013; Haug, 2015; Kiyama, Tamaoka, and Takiura, 2012; Afful, 2018; Temidayo, 2017 etc.). The other dimension that received quiet a number of studies in the 21st century is computer mediated discourse, where the present research situates.

Li (2016) analyses impoliteness in email discourse of some Chinese users of English at workplace. The study explores the relationship between specific speech acts and the occurrence of impoliteness and non-politeness; the impolite devices used in frontline business communication; the circumstances, patterns and functions of impoliteness in workplace email amongst. He found out that message enforcers are the most common impoliteness device used, to make a demand, emphasize a position and place blame. And assertive speech act mainly gave rise to potential impoliteness. On another attempt, Mohammed and Abbas (2015) join the impoliteness discussion to bridge the overlap between impoliteness and rudeness concepts. Using Culpeper's (2005) classification of rudeness, they argue that intentionality is the only difference between the two. While rudeness according to them is always intentional, impoliteness could either be intentional or accidental, and impoliteness sometimes emerges as a reaction to a rude behaviour. The closest to the present study is Amaya (2019) who investigates disagreement and (im)politeness in a family group chat. The study realises linguistic use of the participants, the participants' judgement on their utterances to evaluate disagreement and impoliteness in the family discourse with the aid of multimodal elements. The present study differs from all the reviewed studies on two basic grounds: data and the scope (focus) of study. While the focus of thereviewed studies predominantly situate on exploring impoliteness types, the present study extends to also explore the Culpeper's (1996; 2011) view that:

powerfuldiscourse participants enjoy the advantage of reducing the ability of the less powerful participant in retaliation, where they use impoliteness more freely in threatening more severe retaliation should the addressee (less powerful participant) attempt to retaliate.

Situating the Research
Much attention of Linguistic studieshave been drawn towards interactions that both interlocutors participate and make evaluation of their propositions such as plays/drama, email, political debates, and even WhatsApp group chat (e.g. Dobs, 2013; Amaya, 2019 Mohammed and Abbas2015; Akintola, Bello and Daramola, 2017) as this study sets to undertake.Generally, computer mediated communication has overtaken the attention of contemporary scholars across disciplines. Narrowing to linguistics, precisely pragmatics, evidence from the existing literature reveals that (im)politeness concept receives more attention in the 21st century (Amaya, 2019). While this study argues that 'space and time' greatly encourages comments and counter-comments in a group communication regardless of the participants status, such a privilege may excessively be used and/or be abused, which may result to impoliteness. This study therefore,interrogates (im)politenessfeatures from intellectual interaction as ASUU's. Furthermore, the research aims at testing practically, the Culpeper's (2011) supposition that less powerful discourse participant(s) are likely to be disadvantaged with retaliation ability through the power of argument. It is maintained in this research that face is situational and social context sensitive that is both speaker and as well as hearer-centered that usually produce feelings of embarrassment, shame, humiliation, agitation, confusion, defensiveness, or chagrin.

Theoretical Underpinning
Facework concept, generally (positive or negative and/or saved or threatened), in individual social interactions began with the work of Goffman's (1955, 1967) conception of the face as the positive social value a person effectively claims for him/herself (Kiyama, Tamaoka, &

Takura, 2012; Redmond, 2015; Nwobia, 2016; Taiwo, 2020). Goffman postulates that individuals "universally" want their face to be acknowledged by other members of the society. Deriving from the Goffman's conception, Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) formulate the foremost politeness theory that tends to be the most popular modification of all the contemporary approaches to the concept (Odebumi in Kareem, 2018).Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory blends and refinesGoffman's (1967) face notion and Grice's (1975) Cooperative principle to account for the redressing of the affronts to face posed by face-threatening acts (Nwobia, 2016, 105).

Face as individual's public self-image and self-esteem; an emotional aspect of an individual, could be enhanced, maintained, or lost (Kareem, 2018). The face management view by Brown and Levinson proposed three considerations of threatening another person's face as: the degree to which we feel a need to communicate the failure or misconduct; the degree of urgency or need for efficiency; and third, the degree to which we want to protect the face of the other person (Brown and Levinson 1987 in (Redmond, 2015). According to Brown and Levinson, all the three outlined factors are independent and relevant to interact with one another in determining how people engage in facework (Kiyama, Tamaoka, &Takiura, 2012: 3). The theory have been reviewed and remodelled by many scholars (e.g. Ting-Toomey 1985, 1988, 2005; Craig et al., 1986; Bayraktraroglu,1991; Holtgraves, 1992; Imahori, 1993; O'Driscoll, 1996; Spencer-Oatey 2000; Ruhi 2006; Locher and Bousfield, 2008; Bousfield, 2008; Terkourafi, 2008; Culpeper 1996, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2017; Leech, 2014 etc.). For the purpose of this research, Culpeper's (1996, 2011) model is adopted and would be discussed below.

Culpeper's (1996, 2005) Model of Impoliteness
Jonathan Culpeper first introduced impoliteness model in (1996) to further expands the Brown and Levinson's politeness theory with the view of producing disharmony between discourse participants in social interactions. The model is placed to be advantageous over other models for its flexible consideration to both verbal and written data (Bousfield, 2008, cited in Mohammed &Abbas, 2015). Culpeper (2011 cited in Taiwo, 2020: 121) therefore proposes five super strategies through which impoliteness can be created and received as follows:

Bald on record impoliteness
Speakers employ this strategy where the face is not irrelevant or minimized. It is therefore performed clearly, directly and, without any ambiguity when there is much face at risk and when a speaker intends to damage the hearer's face (Bousfield, 2008, p. 92 cited in Kareem, 2018). What Culpeper introduces here is the concept of face-attack-act (FAA), in opposition to FTA, in order to identify the face attack where there is a deliberate intention on the part of the speaker (Mullany& Stockwell, 2010 cited in Mohammed &Abbas, 2015: 201).

Positive impoliteness
This is an impoliteness strategy that targets to damage the hearer's positive face want (denies his face desire) (Bousfield and Locher, 2008, 134). This view has been remodelled by Culpeper (2005, cited in Taiwo 2020) to add a range of sub-strategies to positive impoliteness that includes the following: ignoring or snubbing the other; denying common ground with the hearer; selecting a sensitive or undesirable topic to talk about; using inappropriate identity

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markers; being disinterested and unsympathetic with the hearer; looking for disagreements; using obscure language and inserting secretive words within the discourse; and, using taboo words.

Negative impoliteness
Negative as implies, is a strategy that targets to attack the hearer's negative face want (his desire to be free from imposition) (Mohammed &Abbas, 2015: 201). The strategy which equally embedded in it further sub-strategies in accordance with Culpeper's (2005) incarnation, as follows: scorn; frighten; ridicule; And invade the hearer's space literally or metaphorically.

Sarcasm or mock impoliteness
This is a strategy, whereby the speaker performs the FTA through insincere politeness strategies (Kareem, 2018). Invariably, sarcasm refers to the use of one or more sub-strategies which are superficially suitable and accepted but really opposite meaning in the current context.

Withhold politeness
The last strategy arises when the speaker does not perform politeness where is it expected (e.g. keeping silence upon receiving present from hearer) (Ajayi 2020).

Impoliteness Types
The Culpeper's approach to (im)politeness having centered towards both interactants, proposes three types of impoliteness in his up-to-date book*, Impoliteness: Using Language to Cause Offence (2011).* These types share the function of contradicting interpersonal relationships, identities, andsocial norms (Mohammed and Abbas, 2015, 201):

Affective impoliteness: The kind of impoliteness where the speaker exposes anger towards the hearer and thereby generating a negative emotional atmosphere between both interlocutors.

Coercive impoliteness: This is the type of impoliteness that raises realignment between the interlocutors that the addressee gains profits at the expense of the addressor. According to Culpeper (in...), this type of impoliteness arises to a greater extent, in situations where the producer is advantaged as superior than the hearer. Coercive impoliteness is simply a means of getting power via language (Culpeper, 2011, 252). Commands/imperatives are clear example of this type of impoliteness.

Entertaining impoliteness: The last kind of impoliteness is when the speaker pokes fun at the hearer and utilizes the target's feelings to obtain amusement (Ibid.).
The Culpeper's model has been nominated for its consideration to context than principles. Not only this theory is suitable for the present study, but owing the hypothesis that some of the face threateners in the data might be of coordinate status (or even below), the aspect of connection between power and impoliteness (as proposes Culpeper, 2011) will also be explored in the study empirically.

METHODOLOGY

The dataset of this research was generated from a Whatsap group called FHSSM at the University of Kashere in Nigeria. In full, the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Management whatsApp group. The group comprise only Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) members of the Kahsere University branch with about 200 participants. However, the predominant Chat of the group is mainly written discourse with few emojis. The topics usually discussed on the platform capitalise on the academic progress and setback in Nigeria, and as well as the staff wellbeing asynchronically. On very rare occasions, names are mentioned on the cause of deliberation.Some of the discourses were delivered in Hausa (probably due to the inclusion of Hausa Department), which is interpreted into English in the analysis. The dataset covers 2019 to 2020 posts. Specifically, the discourses on praising/condemning members who adhere/fault the ASUU directives were purposively selected. This study having confined around the ambit of computer-mediated communication and discursive pragmatics, the data is labelled and line numbered for logical reference in the analysis.

The Analysis
This section is devoted for the analysis ofimpoliteness strategies and the self-imposition of the powerful interlocutor(s) over the powerless as contextually manifested in the discourse under this study. For logical presentation, the analysis will broadly be categorised according to the research objectives to account for the face threatening acts, as well as the self-imposition of powerful interlocutor over the powerlessdiscourse participants. Nonetheless, further subcategories submerge under the broad categories as presented in turn below:

The impoliteness strategies
Three impoliteness strategies have largely been realised from the data *viz:* bald on record, negative and positive impoliteness. While some of these linguistic practices are directly expressed, some are indirectly embedded in the discourse context. The instances are presented under the following extracts:

Extract 1
Tag 1 A: Where are we going with the *trend of traitors* these days?
Tag 2 A: (highlights Tag 1A) Where sir?
Tag 1 B: (highlights the question, Tag 2A) I am referring to *our predicament*
Tag 2 B: Learn to live *with it* sir(response to Tag 1B)

The Extract 1 above is a chain of discourse exchanges between two colleagues in the FHSSMWhatsApp group chat. Reading through the discourse, the first speaker (in Tag 1 A) rhetorically asks question to invoke response from fellow colleagues. The message, which aims at initiating a topic to the group, indirectly invites members for discussion by drawing their attention on an issue which appears to be of general concern to the group members. The speaker does so by employing a collective pronominal form "we" to systematically involve every member in propounding solution to the matter raised. In the second Tag, the second speaker (Tag 2A) seems to have not gotten the message clearly, thereby highlights the post (Tag 1A) and posed a question, what enables the first speaker further explain to point at a particular action. Going by the response in Tag 2 B, the second speaker has been refreshed about the idea,

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thereby co-constructs on the background knowledge of what the referent action (predicament) stands for, and joins the discourse.

An in-depth analysis of Excerpt 1 unveils that the central idea contained in the discourse is abhorrence of a character(s) attributed to some anonymous members by the interlocutors. Although they somewhat distant themselves from the attitude of the target face to threat, they are yet conscious of their belonging to the union. The central idea in the extract, the speakers' act of labelling some colleagues as traitors, disregards their face(s), thereby evaluated as linguistic impoliteness. Equally, on a more critical analysis, the same act can be explicated to have target at boosting other members' face(s) at the expense of the labelled face(s). Mapping the said acts against the analytical framework adopted in this study, Culpepper's (2011) impoliteness superstrategies, positive impoliteness have been fulfilled. This is because, five of the eight ingredients (sub-strategies) that include, ignoring or snubbing the other; selecting a sensitive or undesirable topic to talk about; using inappropriate identity markers; looking for disagreements; using obscure language and inserting secretive words within the discourse, have been manifested. Although the first speaker did not specifically mention the names of those traitors, but his response in Tag 1 B and the remark of his interlocutor in Tag 2B explicates that their target are within the group. Owing to the fact that speakers are not unaware of the presence of those colleagues (the target faces) in the group, these acts can be evaluated as positive impoliteness that damage their face(s) by referring to them as *traitors and predicaments* of the Association (ASUU). Further instances of linguistic impoliteness manifest in the data as presented under Extract 2 below:

Extract 2
Tag 1 A: *IPPIS compliants in Kashere* have been receiving theirs this morning.
Tag 2A: Then something must be wrong somewhere
Tag 2B: (highlights Exp5) Did you mean ASUU traitors?
Tag 1B: (highlights Exp 7) Yes
Tag 3A: Most of us keep talking here and have not attended the last 2 to 5 congress of the branch in which all these issues were discussed. Remember, *we have saboteurs that have enrolled into IPPIS* and are making flimsy comments against the union here.
Tag 4 A: Please, what is happening here?
They have started paying their loyalists.
Is there anything like this here please?
Tag 2C: Sir, I'm most stranded than you. I detest IPPIS. My friends here know that *I am not a double standard person.*
TAG 5A: The FG is placing us under punishment for not registering IPPIS. *Some of us are being used to make them succeed.* Never again I move that we commence strike on Monday if FG fails to pay.
TAG 6 A: (highlighted Exp 12 and state) In total support sir
TAG 6 B: Tohina R. B. ne koyaruga Abuja ne?
TAG 6 C: By all indications people are tired fa. Na jima ban jiMalama Fatima da R.B. ba, kodaisuan Abuja ne kam?
TAG 7 A: (seems either Fatima or the R.B) highlight the EXp 9 and posted a smile emoji
TAG 7 B: (seems either Fatima R.B.) highlight the EXp 9 and posted a smile emoji

Exp 8 A: "...God bless all ASUU leadership *and loyal memebers* and He (maybe God) shall continue to provide for our needs.

TAG 9 A: ...You are too poor to pay for my time bro. *Even the salary you got as a result of enrolment into IPPIS cannot do. So, back off you sell out.*

TAG 9 B: Now I understand why you throw yourself to IPPIS. I hope what you earn here last forever.

Extract 2 above presents a polylogue from the ASUU group, where four simultaneous discussions with nine participants are randomly going on the sameissue. The first four exchanges are managed by two members who concentrate on the ASUU directives defaulters who register with IPPIS, whom they refer to as *traitors*. Equally, from lines 5 to 13 is a different polylogue between another set of members agonising about the same defaulters of the union's directives who enrolled into the IPPIS. The second discourse which is managed by three members, describes the noncompliant members to ASUU directives (who register to IPPIS) as *saboteurs.* Fourth part of Extract 2, starting from lines 14 to 23 again contains a discussion between three members who encourage themselves on resisting to the ASUU directives for resisting the industrial action and snub enrolment into IPPIS. Unlike the instances above, the last part of the Extract 2 is a monologue which a member is nervously expressing anger a particular colleague who got enrolled into IPPIS.

Pragmatic reading of the Extract 2 further reveals that impoliteness have largely been observed through *bald on record strategy* from the data. It has practically been established that all the speakershave clearly, directly and, without any ambiguity, disregard the presence of their colleagues' faces who have enrolled into the IPPIS and criticise them. Therefore, this act is said to be intentional attempt to damage those colleagues' faces since they are not unaware of their presence in the group. Such unambiguous utterance as "*IPPIS compliants in Kashere"* corresponds to what Culpeper (2011, cited in Taiwo, 2020, pp 121)refers to as"*face-attack-act"*(FAA), because it is deliberately and intentionally meant to attack some faces in the group by the speakers.

Furthermore, *Negative impoliteness* have largely been realised from the discourse. Having the speakers known about the presence of those colleagues who may not wish such issues be discussed on the platform, their act can simply be understood as a deliberate, and intentionally target to attack those colleagues' negative faces want. This instance can be illustrated in Tags 1A and 2B below:

Tag 1 A: *IPPIS compliants in Kashere* have been receiving theirs this morning.

Tag 2B: (highlights Tag 1A) Did you mean ASUU traitors?

From the above exchange, the discussion on IPPIS compliants has been initiated by the first speaker through topicalisation in order to specifically give the issue prominence. Likewise, it has equally been observed that the second speaker joins the discussion by rhetorically asking a leading question that further backs the spiteful position of the first speaker towards the said defaulters. Therefore, it has largely been established in the above expressions (Tag 1A and 2B) that the speakers' reference to the *IPPIS compliants in Kashere* and *ASUU traitors* are intentional and unambiguous. It is equally believable that the speakers are not unaware of the presence of their referees on the platform. Inference can therefore be made from these

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references to evaluate the speakers' acts as target toscorn, frighten, and ridicule their fellow colleagues. Hence, it is classified impolite that is achieved through bald on record strategy.

The imposition of powerful interlocutor over the powerless
Coming down to the second claim of the research, evidence of self imposition of the powerful interlocutors over the powerless has however been largely realised from the data. These linguistic practices have manifested in the data as presented under extract 3 below.

Extract 3
Tag 1 A "...*shut off and allow the bonified members to talk here*"
Tag 2 A "...and they feel comfortable to join our discussion here to sound as if they are part of us. Let them stop talking here"
Tag 3 A " let them leave the platform"
Tag 2B ...I think we just have to remove them from the group...

Reading through the extract 3above, imperatives have been the most preponderantly employed utterances by the powerful members to impose themselves over the other participants in the discourse. This implies some implicational tendencies of common ground among the interlocutors. The tendency could either be that the speaker is suspecting the hearer(s) of violating directives of the union (possibly enrolling into the IPPIS) and the hearer too noticed same; or that they personally know each other and the speaker is superior. Be it as it may in that regard, the imposers act of authoritatively dismissing the other interlocutor from expressing his opinion to contribute on the floor (as other members do), is intentional, and thereby evaluated as impoliteness that threatens the hearer's face. Adding to that, the silence of the purportedly threatened members' faces can however be evaluated as the implicational impoliteness.

DISCUSSION

Basing on the Culpeper's (2016) conditions of conventional impoliteness formulae as articulated under theoretical perspective of this study, words such as *saboteurs, traitors,Maikanti boys and IPPIS compliants*, can generally be defined as aggravating words, which can thereby conventionally be evaluated as face threatening acts according to the discourse context under this study. This corroborates the requisite of the conventional evaluation of impoliteness act as Culpeper (2016, pp 423) puts, "regular usage of the utterances to mean same act in the context". While the said utterances are quintessentially proven to be aggravating, the justification of their evaluation as impolite can further be located in the Culpeper's second requisite that, an utterance(s) is impolite if is not contentious through "counter impoliteness" or "meta-pragmatic comments"(verbally expressed or nonverbally through emotions). This is because it has obviously been established that the said utterances have indicate negative experience of the impoliteness act to the hearer (the threatened faces).
Moreover, the impoliteness elements realised in the analysis can further be regrouped and subcategorised into two broad sub-strategies as *Insults* and *dismissals/silencers* based on Culpeper's (2011, ascited in Culpeper, 2016:425) sub-strategies of conventionalised impoliteness triggers.

To begin with the insults, three ingredients out of the four subclasses of the insults have been realised in the analysis as *personalised negative assertions*; *personalised negative references*; *personalised third-person negative references*. For example, the expression, "even the salary you got as a result of enrolment into IPPIS cannot do"is a good example of personalised negative assertions. This evaluation is credited to the fact, the speaker directly threatened the hearer's face, using personal demonstrative pronoun (singular) 'you' to expressly appraise his intention. Another practical instance can be seen in the quote, "Now I understand why you throw yourself to IPPIS. I hope what you earn here last forever". Personalised third-person negative references in the other hand, has been expressed as a strategy used by the speaker(s)' to engage addressor(s) through the use of third person linguistic markers (it could be anonymous subject) to insult them to their hearing. This instance can equally be seen from the quote,"*IPPIS compliants in Kasherehave been receiving theirs this morning",* with the aid of further explication such as, "I am referring toour predicament". As earlier produced under the analysis, the words such as *saboteurs, their loyaliststhat have enrolled into IPPIS, IPPIS compliants*are all third persons in the discussion. The interlocutors' act of making the third person reference here is not done unaware, since they are not unaware of their presence in the group. Therefore, the speakers' act of reiterating those references can be justified as intentional, thereby evaluated as impoliteness act meant to threaten the targeted face(s) (the members who have enrolled into IPPIS).

As for the Dismissals/silencers, all the *self imposition* elements identified in the analysis are said to be good examples of this subcategory. These strategies are not only employed to threaten faces, but also to directly attack the utterances of the hearers by belittling them, or imperatives to deny such hearer(s) participation in the discourse. The instances of these expressions include, "back off you sell out", "Mr... shut off and allow the bonafide members to contribute in this matter", "those that enrolled into IPPIS should allow the great minds deliberate on their issues". These instances as earlier demonstrated under the analysis justifies the evaluation of this subcategory as dismissal/silencers strategy.

CONCLUSION

The study examines face threatening acts and the self-imposition of the powerful discourse participants over the powerless interlocutors from a computer mediated group discourse of Academic staff union of universities (ASUU) members in Federal University of Kashere, Nigeria on WhatsApp. This investigation was basically anchored on Culpepper's (2011) theory of impoliteness. From a number of evaluations established by the speakers as exhibited throughout the analysis, the research affirms the relevance of intentionality in achieving impoliteness. The research findings reveal that the most preponderantly employed strategies deployed in the discourse are *Insults* and *dismissals/silencers,* while the former further classified into three *viz, personalised negative assertions*; *personalised negative references*; and *personalised third-person negative references.*It is however the conclusion of the present study that some discourse participants attack/damage or boost faces of their interlocutors at the expense of others in a polylogue discourse. Moreover, the research findings further corroborate Culpeper's (2017) postulation that the conventionalised impoliteness formulae are more than a theory, but methodology and as well as analytical framework.

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